

Six ways to jump-start Mariah Carey's career

For starters, the singer needs to find Alicia Keys' number and lose Mystikal's

By [Liane Bonin](#) | January 25, 2002 at 05:00 AM EST



Rumor has become reality: Virgin has dumped Mariah Carey, paying \$28 million to buy her out of her reported \$80 million four-album contract. This news comes just four months after Mariah Carey checked into a New York area hospital suffering from "extreme exhaustion." Since then, the "Glitter" star has hit the comeback trail running, cheering the troops in Kosovo, playing a lovelorn neurotic on a recent "Ally McBeal," and signing on to warble the national anthem at the Super Bowl Feb. 3. EW.com asked industry insiders what else the songbird should do to end the punchlines and revive her career.

Call Clive Davis, NOW If EMI does give Carey the boot, her first phone call should be to Davis' J Records. Davis, who launched artists ranging from Janis Joplin and Whitney Houston to Alicia Keys, has resuscitated careers before (he's responsible for Santana's Grammy winning comeback). "He not only guides the music, but also the artist's image, really giving it up to make every detail right," says DoublXXposure image consultant Angelo Ellerbee, whose clients include Mary J. Blige and DMX. Davis' short list of artist also means he could make Carey a top priority.

Stop the power trip Unfortunately Carey, still smarting from ex-husband Tommy Mottola's micromanaging at Sony Music, isn't likely to embrace Davis' hands-on approach. But having it her way is clearly the wrong way. "We aren't idiots in this field," says one marketing exec at a rival label. "It happens all the time that, once they're stars, musicians believe they're right and everyone else is full of s—. That works if you have good taste, like Madonna. But from what we've been seeing, Mariah doesn't. My first tip for her is, start listening to the overpaid yoyos who give you advice."